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Region III Headquarters

July 2, 1984

Mr. Patrick A. Lincoln
Director Environmental Affairs
Total Petroleum, Inc.
East Superior Street
Alma, Michigan 48801



Dear Mr. Lincoln:

This is in response to the May 1, 1984, letter from Ben White, representing your Company, to Robert E. Basch of my staff. Mr. White's letter responded to my April 4, 1984, letter regarding Total's hazardous waste land treatment system. This letter also summarizes the MDNR position regarding the various items in Mr. White's letter which were discussed in a May 30, 1984, meeting between representatives of your Company and our Department. As discussed in our May 30, 1984, meeting, based on reviewing Mr. White's letter and proposal and intradepartmental discussion, we have concluded that further studies at this site will not be able to conclusively show that this land treatment system has not failed due to the complexities of this land treatment system. We have concluded, therefore, that this system must be closed and the contaminated groundwater cleaned up. In addition, the areal extent of contaminated groundwater downgradient from the land farm must be determined and cleaned up.

With regard to your Company's specific proposals, I will deal with each of the items discussed in Mr. White's letter:

1. Groundwater Clean-up

The system proposed for cleaning up the groundwater contaminated in the immediate vicinity of the land treatment system consists of an upgradient slurry wall and downgradient purge wells. The Company, in proposing this system, clearly views this proposal as both a remedial measure as well as a system that will allow the land treatment system to continue to be operated. Our position is that this may be an acceptable remedial measure. We do not agree, however, that this system can be used to allow on-going operation of the land treatment system. We will not agree with any proposal for an operating system that allows hazardous wastes to reach the groundwater. In fact, we originally approved the land treatment system because we were confident that these wastes would not reach the groundwaters.

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Based on the foregoing, we believe you should analyze other alternatives for site closure and clean-up. In this regard you should present information outlining engineering specifics of the alternatives considered, the economic costs (both capital and operating costs) of each alternative and the expected cleanup benefits achieved by each alternative.] 1

Our Department policy has been to allow contaminated groundwater to be discharged to surface waters only if a high percentage of contaminants are removed. In this respect we would expect the Company to document that such high degree of removal will be accomplished in the proposed clean-up scheme. In addition, if we do approve of such a scheme, the Company's NPDES surface water discharge permit will need to be modified.] 2
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2. The Extent of the Contamination

Mr. White's letter and the proposal from your consultants only described the plan of study to document the lateral and vertical extent of the contamination in the immediate vicinity of the land farm. Our position is that this is inadequate and that the Company must document the full extent of the contaminated plume not just that portion of the plume in the immediate vicinity of the land farm.] 4

The Company must not only document the full extent of groundwater contamination emanating from the land farm vicinity, but also clean up all of these contaminated groundwaters, not just those groundwaters in the immediate vicinity of the land farm.] 5

Therefore, the Company should present a comprehensive proposal that will both document the full extent of the plume and result in clean-up of all of these contaminated groundwaters. The existing proposal does neither and is unacceptable. Lastly, as we have repeatedly indicated to the Company, we are concerned with the extensive amount of time that has elapsed. The Company should conduct the remaining studies in an expedited fashion.] 6

3. Specific Elevated Constituents

You should review this proposed study in light of the need to gather data to complete the closure and clean-up alternatives evaluated. You have discussed this work with various MDNR staff and we encourage you to continue these discussions. We must repeat our earlier point about the extensive lapse of time that has accompanied studies addressing this issue. Again, you should commit the effort and resources necessary to gather the needed data in as short a time as possible.] 7
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4. Source of Constituents

As discussed previously, our Department position is that we do not believe, because of the complexities of the land farm site, that you can prove that the land farm is not the source of the groundwater contaminants. We accordingly believe that all of the sampling effort and resources proposed to address this issue should be redirected in the effort to close this land farm and complete the groundwater clean-up. To the extent that the proposal supplies information useful in reaching decisions as to the appropriate alternative to employ to reach these objectives, we can concur that the studies are valid. However, we cannot agree with these studies if they are only aimed at proving the land farm is effective and we strongly recommend that they be redirected as indicated.

5. Monitoring Data Questions

Based on the evidence presented in Mr. White's letter, we agree that lead and oil/grease do not appear to be elevated in the groundwater in the vicinity of the land farm as was earlier stated in my April 4, 1984, letter.

6. Total Petroleum, Inc.'s Objective

As was stated in our May 30, 1984, meeting, and earlier in this letter, our Department does not agree with your Company's objective of using this land treatment system to treat hazardous waste. I ordered this system closed in my April 4, 1984, letter and must reiterate that order. Additionally, as stated earlier, not only must this system not be used, but it must be permanently closed and the contaminated groundwater cleaned up. In response to the remainder of Mr. White's discussion as to other Company objectives, we can agree with them only to the extent that they will result in the closure of the land farm and clean-up of these contaminated groundwaters.

7. Follow-Up Meeting

We conducted a follow-up meeting to discuss Mr. White's response and, thus, this is a moot point. We would agree to meet again at the earliest possible date to discuss studies and alternative closure and clean-up alternatives. Given that you have had an excess of three weeks since our meeting to prepare study plans and consider alternatives, I would expect to receive from you additional proposals by July 23, 1984. We can meet within 2 weeks after that date to discuss your proposals and finalize needed studies.

Mr. Lincoln

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If you have questions or need further clarification, please contact Mr. Robert Basch at 517-322-1300 or me.

Sincerely,

Delbert Rector, Chief
Hazardous Waste Division
517-373-2730

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